Patients' experiences of lung cancer during COVID-19

Insights from Canada

GLOBAL LUNG CANCER COALITION

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on patients, including those living with lung cancer, and healthcare systems around the world.

The Global Lung Cancer Coalition (GLCC), an alliance of 42 patient organisations from 30 countries across the world, wanted to understand if COVID-19 is still impacting the care patients receive, and to compare the experiences of patients in different countries.

In December 2021, the GLCC shared a **global online patient experience survey**.

The survey ran for eight weeks and received **555 responses** from patients across **21 countries**.

Key findings from Canada

Demographics

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lung cancer patients or their carers responded

75% of respondents identified as female, **25%** identified as male

82%

were diagnosed in the last **five years**

76% have non-small cell lung cancer

Treatment

59% of responding patients are currently **having treatment**. **37%** had just **finished treatment**, and **one patient** had **just been diagnosed**

Involvement in decisions

96% felt involved in decisions about their treatment and care. **One patient** said they **were not** involved but would like to have been

Accessing information

54%

of patients said they got the information they needed at the right time. But ten patients (38%) **had to look for more information** on their own and two patients said information came **too late**

Screening

Less than one third

(31%) of responding patients were **aware** of a lung cancer screening programme in Canada

Of those, **three** patients said they had been diagnosed following a screening appointment

88% said they **would attend** a screening appointment if invited

Emotional impact

Getting the lung cancer diagnosis and **waiting to find out scan results** had the biggest emotional impact for 56% and 41% of patients respectively

48% said they are **fearful of relapse** while **41%** are **worried about the impact on their family**

Half (52%) of patients said that speaking with **family and friends** and speaking to their **treatment team** were the most helpful in dealing with their emotions

Impact of COVID-19

88% of responding patients have been vaccinated against COVID-19

44% patients said there was **no difference** in how easy it has been to contact their treatment team during COVID-19. 52% said their **treatment has continued** as normal; appointments have carried on, but 56% had appointments **swapped from face-to-face to virtual**

A **majority** of patients **prefer face-to-face appointments** in most situations, particularly when finding out their diagnosis and for the first consultation. 35% would like to telephone if they are worried about something

Call to action

The members of the GLCC are calling for the implementation of the rights outlined in its Patient Charter, namely ensuring that all lung cancer patients have access to quality healthcare; informed self-determination, which includes involvement in decision-making; and physical and mental integrity.

More information

The GLCC's members in Canada are:

- Canadian Lung Association: https://www.lung.ca
- Cancer Advocacy Coalition of Canada: http://www.canceradvocacy.ca
- Lung Cancer Canada: https://www.lungcancercanada.ca
- Lung Health Foundation: https://lunghealth.ca

For more information about this survey and the work of the GLCC, please visit our website: https://www.lungcancercoalition.org or email our secretariat at: glcc@roycastle.org